

UNION EVILS EVADE A.F.L. SAYS FRAYNE

Lockwood Committee Hears
Labor Leader Admit
Lack of Power.

CHARGES PUT TO JURY

Electrical Union Inquiry
Stopped as Evidence
Points to Crime.

WIDOW TO GET HER \$850

Plasterers Arbitrator Who As-
sesses Fines Has No Brief
for Employers.

Hugh Frayne, general organizer and New York representative of the American Federation of Labor, testifying yesterday before the Lockwood Legislative Committee on Housing, admitted that several forms of abuses had crept into local labor organizations, and that while this was a regrettable fact there was little that the A. F. of L. could do about it.

The federation said Mr. Frayne, was opposed to limitation of membership as practised by organizations investigated by the committee since Monday. It is opposed also to abuse of the permit card system, but because most of the organizations enjoyed full autonomy in this respect the federation had no jurisdiction. Mr. Frayne himself would correct these abuses if he had the power, he told the committee.

One suggestion by Samuel Untermyer, counsel, met Mr. Frayne's vigorous objection. That was that the labor unions be compelled to incorporate. As he was leaving the stand the labor leader said:

"I hope you will not recommend any legislation that will compel the unions to incorporate."

Employers' Suits Feared.

Mr. Untermyer's idea is that incorporation, while not interfering with the freedom of action of the organizations, would guarantee an honest administration for members and the public. He wanted to know why Mr. Frayne objected so seriously to the suggestion. The latter explained:

"Because it would result in the employers invoking the law against the unions on any and every pretext. I know that from experience."

Mr. Frayne thought that not all of the abuses in the building industry were due to the labor unions, adding:

"I would not like the impression to go out that we are entirely to blame. I don't want only the dark side of the picture presented."

"How far will the American Federation of Labor go in correcting the abuses complained of and exposed by this committee?" Mr. Untermyer demanded.

"We will go as far as it is possible to go—as far as we should go," Mr. Frayne replied. He had explained previously that the Federation had no jurisdiction or control over local organizations that did not hold their charters direct, but operated under authority of some international union. "We can only employ moral suasion," he explained. Except to express a desire to see employers and the unions unite to eliminate conditions which increase the cost of building, the labor man could be no more definite.

An interested listener at the session who was with Mr. Frayne was Thomas L. Williams, a member of the National Board of Conciliation of the Department of Labor. He has engagements to-day and later with Christian G. Norman, chairman of the Board of Governors of the Building Trades Employers Association, with a view of ironing out some of the differences between the employers' association and the Building Trades Council.

Further investigation into the financial operations of Local No. 3 of the Electrical Workers' Union, which it was shown, derived a huge income by issuing working permits at \$2.00 a week to nonunion workers, while keeping the membership restricted to \$2.00, about a fourth of the electricians in the city, was stopped and the record sent to the Grand Jury.

Mr. Untermyer charged that the evidence showed officials of the organization had conspired to extort money from members of the union, contractors and builders, and said that he would ask for an extraordinary term of the Grand Jury in the case. In addition to extortion, he said, grand larceny had been practiced.

Widow to Get Her \$850.

William A. Hogan, financial secretary of the Electrical Workers' Union, who collected death benefits from members, has agreed to pay to Mrs. Margaret Smith, widow of James E. Smith, \$850, representing the difference between Smith's insurance of \$1,000, which Hogan collected on a will that never was probated, and \$150 he paid out for funeral expenses. Mrs. Smith, who is a cripple and financially dependent on a non-lawyer, testified that the union officials never told her that she was entitled to \$1,000 insurance on her husband's life. It was announced that Hogan had promised to pay the money in twenty-four hours.

William J. Walsh, president of Local No. 3, Whitford, the recording secretary, and a man named Boyne, who was Hogan's assistant, were called to the stand, but excused when they refused to sign waivers of immunity. Walter D. Allen of Lenbrook, a former member, told of being "lifted" from his job when he attempted to correct abuses. One of his complaints was about the way the organization elected its officers. He said:

"They'll ride into office one week and the next they are riding around in expensive automobiles."

Michael Collieran, youthful president

and business agent of the Operative Plasterers' Union, attempted to justify affairs in that industry, particularly the destruction of plaster models when once used and paid for by the contractor. He insisted it was for the benefit of the industry. Mr. Untermyer asked:

"I am trying to find out and I will if it takes all winter, on what theory you dictate to owners who are paying you to do the work, how the work shall be done, and override their objections when they disagree with you. How do you justify such conduct?"

Collieran said something, a factor of safety, then admitted that supervision in that direction lay with the public authorities and finally admitted that many of the regulations imposed by the union were to prevent the elimination of work. "You try to make as much work as possible, don't you?" Mr. Untermyer asked.

"Yes," replied the witness.

"Owners Show Cussedness."

Mr. Untermyer again took up the case of the Plaza Hotel, which was described in THE NEW YORK HERALD yesterday. The owners, rather than submit to dictation by a union had abandoned proposed work that they wanted done in their own way. Mr. Untermyer observed:

"It happens, then, that you do occasionally run up against an owner of some independence?"

"I wouldn't call it independence," Collieran remarked.

"Oh, wouldn't you? What would you call it?"

"I'd call it 'cussedness.'"

Mr. Collieran said members of the union frequently were fined for doing bad work. This was for the protection of the industry. Only last Friday twenty-one men had been fined for an offence known in the trade as "brownie or green scratch coat," and assessed \$5 each. It was said Mr. Untermyer brought out, however, that in such cases the fines went into the union's treasury while the owner or builder who had the bad job must pay again for its rectification. Mr. Untermyer asked:

"When a job has been botched and men fined on account of it wouldn't it be a good idea for the unions to pay for it out of the fines?"

"Well, I never thought of that."

Collieran defended the age limit at which apprentice plasterers must begin on the ground that it assures an adequate living wage for them when they reach maturity.

"Arbitrator" Unsympathetic.

John Pearl, vice-president of the plasterers' organization and chairman of the executive committee, has no sympathy with the employers and told the committee so. He presides over the committee that assesses fines against members for infractions and against employers for violating union rules. Despite his professional antagonism toward the employers he was told by Mr. Untermyer he believed he was the right man in the right place to arbitrate disputes.

Pearl described a man who would work between 12 and 14 hours a day when no overtime is provided as "the meanest of the mean," and "40 per cent meaner than a pickpocket." For a foreman who rushed his men Pearl has no respect.

"What do you do to them when you get them before your committee?" Mr. Untermyer asked.

"Oh, everything imaginable," the witness replied nonchalantly.

"Well, just tell us. How do you crucify them?"

"We don't crucify them; we stick the harpoon into them."

At the close of the hearing Mr. Frayne of the A. F. of L. was observed in the corridor talking earnestly and seriously with Mr. Pearl, driving his remarks home with emphatic gestures. Mr. Untermyer had asked Mr. Frayne if the A. F. of L. approved of having men of such decided views as Mr. Pearl in positions where they controlled the relations between employers and employees.

E. R. MacDougal, president of the Queensborough Corporation, engaged in building multifamily houses at Jackson Heights, Corona, told of long delays and difficulties with plasterers' organizations. The company on one occasion had been fined \$75 by the Building Trades Council for refusing to employ a foreman on a job that took two men. The fine had to be paid, he said, before the work could go on.

The hearing will be continued next Tuesday.

'CHINATOWN GERTIE' IS NO BACKSLIDER

Former Bowery Habitué Tells
of Her Regeneration in
Rescue Mission.

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When 'Lady' Found Her She
Was 'Cleverest Pickpocket
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Eleven years ago last night Chinatown Gertie "found God." She came back for that anniversary to the Rescue Mission in 5 Doyers street, where the old Chinese theatre was, and told the men who drifted in there what she was and the things she did when she was known along the Bowery as one of the cleverest pickpockets in the game and in the missions as a woman who had slipped down beyond help.

Last night was the second of Gertie's anniversaries—Gertie's, because it is by the old name that she is still known. Tuesday her sister sat on the platform with her, the same sister who years before told Gertie she had disgraced the family, that she must get out of the house, that she never wanted to see her again.

When Superintendent Noonan introduced her to come to the old Rescue Mission at 15 Doyers street and how there was a corner reserved for the women who came in off the Bowery and chattered and gossiped so during the service that they gave more trouble than the men.

It was in a Bowery saloon one night that Gertie's regeneration began. "A lady came in," she told the men, "and talked to me about my soul. I told her to stop that funny kind of talk. I said, 'Can that chatter.' She gave me a red rose, and she told me to stand for the blood of Jesus Christ shed for us, and she said that although your sins be as snow, they shall be as white as snow. I stuck the rose in my pocket and tried to forget about it. But I couldn't forget that about they shall be as white as snow, and finally I just had to go to her. I didn't go straight right away. It took time."

"And men, before that, I was stopped almost all the time. I stole even from my friends. I spent more than one night in an opium den."

"The men in the mission didn't laugh when Gertie told them how drunk she used to be. There was something in her face, something in the way she smiled at them which made that impossible."

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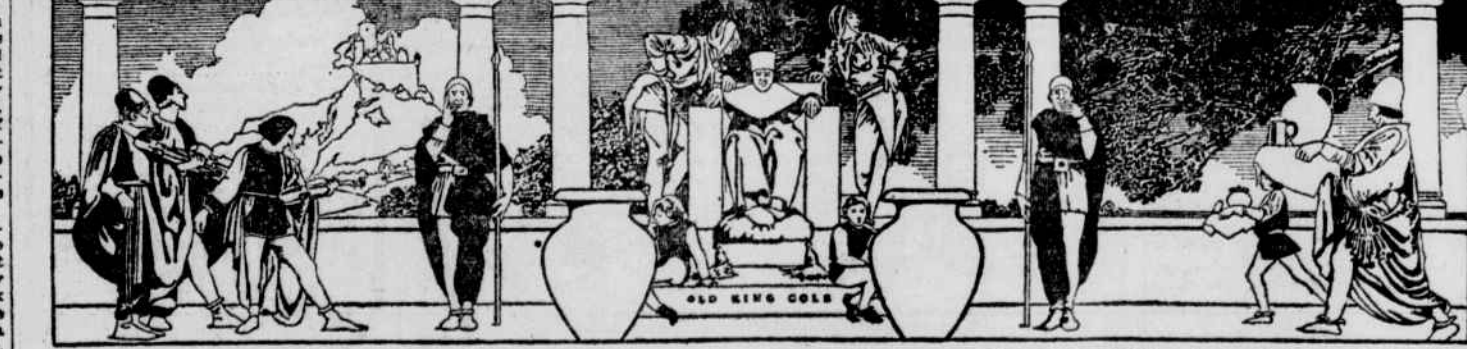
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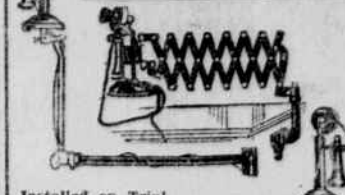
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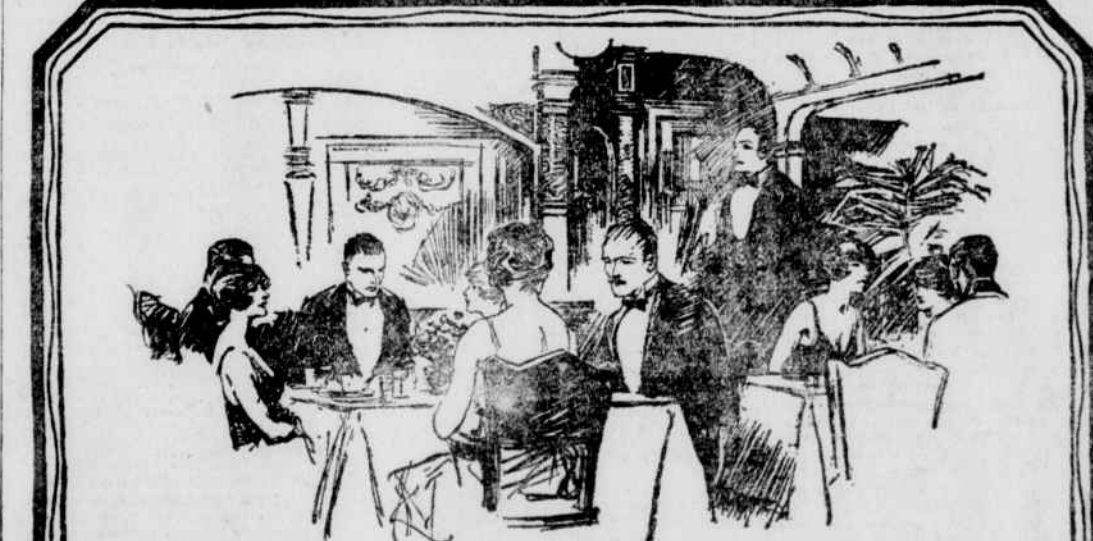
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